

REMARKS

Claims 7, 9, 10, and 12 are pending in this application, the independent claim being claim 7. By this Amendment, claims 7, 9, 10, and 12 are amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the August 10, 2006 personal interview by Examiner Ewald and Primary Examiner Del Sole. The substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

I. Rejections Based on 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office Action has rejected claims 9, 10 and 12 under 35 U. S. C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, the Office Action states that the specification does not indicate that cemented carbide can be substituted for hard metal. Consistent with the discussion during the personal interview, the claims have been amended, replacing the term "hard metal" with "cemented carbide."

The Office Action also has rejected claim 12 under 35 U. S. C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with enablement requirement, as well as under 35 U. S. C. §112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. Consistent with the discussion during the personal interview, Applicants have replaced "μm" with "mm" in claim 12. Claim 12 is now consistent with the specification.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs, be withdrawn.

II. Rejections Based on 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office Action rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Yoshimasa (JP 2000-071225). By this Amendment, Applicants have incorporated the

limitations of claim 8 into claim 7, and therefore this rejection of independent claim 7 is now moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

III. Rejections Based on 35 U. S. C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 8 and 12 under 35 U. S. C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshimasa in view of Suzuki (U. S. Pat. No. 6,193,497) and further in view of Ohno (U. S. Pat. No. 6,669,771); and rejects claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshimasa in view of Masaki (JP 2000-326318). By this Amendment, the limitations of dependent claim 8 have been incorporated into independent claim 7. As such, Applicants will respond to this rejection as if it had been applied to amended claim 7. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Specifically, Applicants submit that neither Yoshimasa, Suzuki, nor Ohno discloses or suggests, either individually or in combination, a die for forming a honeycomb body having at least curved portions that are formed at four corners of a peripheral portion of the die and a radius of curvature of the curved portions is 0.5 to 1.5 mm, as recited in independent claim 7.

The Office Action admits that Yoshimasa fails to teach a die having curved portions formed at four corners of a peripheral portion of the die and a radius of curvature of the curved portions is 0.5 to 1.5 mm. Applicants respectfully assert that neither Suzuki nor Ohno make up for this deficiency.

Specifically, Suzuki teaches a honeycomb extrusion die. The honeycomb structural body has intersecting slits, which are formed by cell blocks that have round portions formed at corners. However, Suzuki does not teach that the radius of curvature of round portions is 0.5 to 1.5 mm.

Ohno merely teaches a ceramic filter assembly and methods of forming the same. Ohno illustrates filter blocks whose corners are rounded, in order to avoid chips or cracks that

form at the edges. However, Ohno fails to teach a die wherein the radius of curvature of round portion is 0.5 to 1.5 mm, but instead discloses a filter block whose corners have the radius of curvature from 0.3 to 2.5 mm. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that Ohno fails to teach the subject matter that is lacking in either Yoshimasa and Suzuki.

The Office Action contends that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to make the die to have round corners with the radius of curvature in the range of 0.5-1.5 mm, to produce a die that would be able to withstand stress and avoid being chipped or cracked. See page 6 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill would not be motivated to make the round corners of honeycomb die to have the radius of curvature in the range of 0.3-2.5 mm based on Ohno, because Ohno teaches making the filter structure by chamfering, which is the process of cutting off the corners of the filter, in order to improve the filter's stress resistance. See lines 18-22, in column 10 of Ohno. The process of chamfering renders modification of die corners redundant, and therefore, Ohno actually teaches away from modifying Suzuki.

In view of the preceding, Applicants respectfully submit that Yoshimasa, Suzuki, and Ohno fail to suggest or teach a die for forming a honeycomb body structure wherein curved portions are formed at four corners of a peripheral portion of the die and a radius of curvature of the curved portions is 0.5 to 1.5 mm, as recited in independent claim 7. Applicants respectfully request that 35 U. S. C. 103(a) rejection of claim 7, as well as the rejections of claims that depend on claim 7, be withdrawn.

Claim 12

The Office Action has rejected dependent claim 12 as being unpatentable over Yoshimasa in view of Suzuki and further in view of Ohno. However, Applicants respectfully assert that the combination of Yoshimasa, Suzuki and Ohno does not suggest or teach die

whose thickness is 16 to 30 mm, as recited in claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that 35 U. S. C. 103(a) rejection of claim 12, be withdrawn.

The Office Action has rejected dependent claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshimasa in view of Masaaki (JP 2000-326318). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Specifically, Applicants assert that Masaaki does not overcome the above-noted deficiencies of Yoshimasa, and therefore cannot render obvious dependent claims 9 and 10. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) of dependent claims 9 and 10 be withdrawn.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 7, 9, 10 and 12 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Bogdan A. Zinchenko
Registration No. 57,473

JAO:BAZ/hs

Date: September 22, 2006

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461
--